

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-5, 7-9, and 15-18 are pending in this application. Claims 1-5, 7-9, and claim 15 stand rejected, and claim 16 is allowed. Claims 10-14 are withdrawn from consideration. In light of the amendments and remarks set forth below, Applicants respectfully submit that each of the pending claims is in condition for immediate allowance.

Claims 1-5, 7-9, 15 and 17-18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,738,388 (Bienek) in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,673,814 (Schroeder). Applicants request reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection. The cited combination fails to disclose:

a metal cover having an axis coaxial with said central axis of said body and at least one end wall parallel to said central axis to be positioned at said top axial end of said body facing said at least one end face of the axial wall of said body; ...

docking said body and said cover so that said end face of the axial wall of said body in the vicinity of said open top thereof and said end wall of said cover face each other and are maintained in contact; and

producing a continuous penetrative weld over the entire periphery of said cover and said body at the ends of their respective walls which are maintained in contact.

As explicitly recited above, claim 1 requires that the cover and the axial wall of the body meet at an end face of the axial wall. In other words, the ends of the metal body and metal cover do not overlap but meet in a butt joint. The butt joint is clearly shown in the present specification at least in Figures 2A-2C. As shown in Figure 2A reproduced below, the cover 2 and body 1 meet at the edge faces of both the axial wall and the end wall.

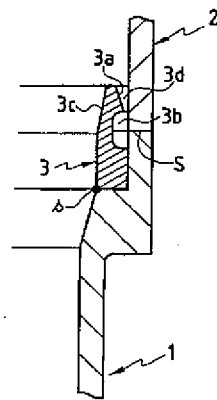
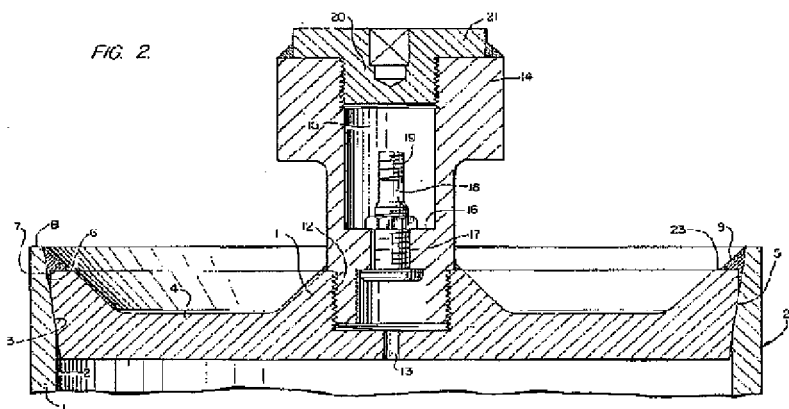


FIG. 2A

As shown in Figure 2A and recited in the claims, each of the cover 2 and body 1 has a respective end surface. These end surfaces meet at a butt joint where a weld S is formed. The weld is a continuous penetrative weld over the entire periphery of the cover and the body at the ends of their respective walls. A penetrative weld is a weld produced over the whole thickness of the walls in question. (Specification as filed at p. 3, ll. 11-16). In other words, the weld is formed at the butt joint over the entire mating surfaces, the mating surfaces being perpendicular to the central axis.



Schroeder fails to disclose a metal cover being docked to the body so that the cover faces an end face of the axial wall of the body. As shown in Schroeder's Figure 2 reproduced above, an

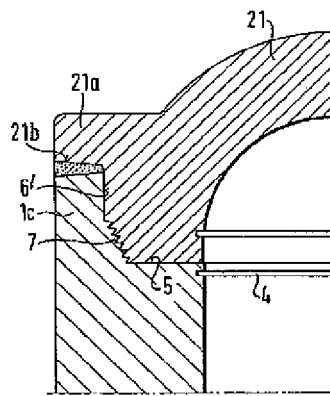
edge surface of the cover mates with an inner surface of the wall. Thus, Schroeder fails to disclose the docking as explicitly recited in claim 1.

Schroeder's rim 8 corresponds to the end face of the axial wall recited in claim 1. Schroeder explicitly states that the "sealing cover 4 is so positioned in the vessel 1 that its upper edge 23 lies beneath the rim 8 of the vessel and is tightly welded to the vessel wall by a fillet weld 9 at the open end of the vessel 1." (Schroeder, Col. 4, 11. 17-22). Thus, in contrast to the express teachings in the present application and claims, namely, that the rim is the mating surface, Schroeder explicitly teaches that the cover is seated on a conical seating surface 3 below the rim of the vessel.

Further, as discussed above, claim 1 recites producing a continuous penetrative weld. In contrast, Schroeder discloses a bevel weld filling a first groove and a second annular fillet weld 9 connecting the cover surface 23 to the inner wall of the interface of wall 22.

As shown in Fig. 2 of Bienek reproduced below, cover wall 21b extends substantially perpendicular to the central axis of the container and is welded to a stepped end face of the body. The cover wall is welded to the body along a length of the cover wall 21b, not at an end face of the cover wall as required by claim 1. Further, the weld is not a penetrative weld over the whole thickness of the walls in question. Thus, the claims are patentable over the cited combination.

FIG. 2



Applicants note that none of the embodiments disclosed by Bienek include the claimed butt joint and penetrative weld. Thus, the combination of Schroeder and Bienek fail to render the pending claims unpatentable.

Applicant has responded to all of the rejections and objections recited in the Office Action. Reconsideration and a Notice of Allowance for all of the pending claims are therefore respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes an interview would be of assistance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned at the number listed below.

It is believed that no fees or charges are required at this time in connection with the present application. However, if any fees or charges are required at this time, they may be charged to our Patent and Trademark Office Deposit Account No. 03-2412.

Respectfully submitted,
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